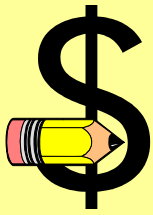


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# SCHOOL FINANCE UPDATE

A Monthly Newsletter Published by the School Finance Division

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## Welcome to the 2004- 05 school year!!

This newsletter is emailed to school districts, county superintendents, county treasurers, and auditors each month. The newsletter is intended to reach all district staff involved in budgeting, accounting, enrollment, special education funding, and federal programs. Please forward this newsletter to all interested parties. Got suggestions for items to include here? We'd love to hear from you!

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### TFS and Final Budgets Due

Please be sure to submit the district's

Trustees' Annual Financial Summary (TFS) and Final Budget to OPI by Monday, September 13, 2004. If you need assistance, contact Nica Carte at (406) 444-4401 or [ncarte@state.mt.us](mailto:ncarte@state.mt.us).

### Excel Spreadsheets—Handy Tools for Clerks!

OPI has lots of Excel spreadsheets available to help clerks perform common duties.

Spreadsheets are posted on the School Finance-School Accounting website at:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/SchoolFinance/Account.html>

#### Spreadsheets include:

- \* Fund 15 Recap-Reconciling Cash in the Miscellaneous Programs Fund
- \* Reconciling Cash to the County Treasurer
- \* Student Activity Fund Recap
- \* Compensated Absences Spreadsheet (NEW)

Need assistance? Contact Denise Ulberg at (406) 444-0783 or [dulberg@state.mt.us](mailto:dulberg@state.mt.us).

### Summary of Tuition Laws

For a summary of tuition laws and rates, see: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/SchoolFinance/Tuition.html>. In that area we posted a one-page (legal-sized) summary showing circumstances, the amount of tuition, the party that pays tuition in each case, etc. OPI contact: Mike Waterman, (406) 444-4524 or [mwaterman@state.mt.us](mailto:mwaterman@state.mt.us).

### What's the *Buzz*?

Browse the Q&A for School Finance at:

[http://data.opi.state.mt.us/scripts/rightnow.cfg/php.exe/enduser/std\\_alp.php?p\\_sid=1sh5k-jh&p\\_lva=&p\\_li=&p\\_gridsort=faqs.title&p\\_row\\_cnt=138&p\\_search\\_text=&p\\_search\\_type=3&p\\_prod\\_lv11=2&p\\_prod\\_lv12=%7Eany%7E&p\\_cat\\_lv11=%7Eany%7E&p\\_sort\\_by=dfit&p\\_page=1](http://data.opi.state.mt.us/scripts/rightnow.cfg/php.exe/enduser/std_alp.php?p_sid=1sh5k-jh&p_lva=&p_li=&p_gridsort=faqs.title&p_row_cnt=138&p_search_text=&p_search_type=3&p_prod_lv11=2&p_prod_lv12=%7Eany%7E&p_cat_lv11=%7Eany%7E&p_sort_by=dfit&p_page=1)

Bookmark It!!



## Job Corps and ANB

Under a law passed in 2001, MCA 20-9-707 allows ANB for the resident district of a student who attends a Montana job corps program at Anaconda, Ronan, or Darby. To claim ANB, students must be enrolled in the resident district and the district must have an interlocal agreement with the job corps. For more information, contact Tal Redpath at (406) 444-3024 or [redpath@state.mt.us](mailto:redpath@state.mt.us).

### School Directory Available Online

The 2004-2005 Directory of Montana Schools has been completed and posted to the OPI web site at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/Directory/>

Due to budget constraints, *there will be no printed copies distributed to Montana schools for school year 2004-2005.*

Schools may purchase printed copies of the 2004-2005 Directory of Montana Schools in mid-to-late September 2004 at \$9.75 each, including shipping and handling:

Allegra Print & Imaging  
40 W Lawrence St., Suite E  
Helena, MT 59601-2847  
(406) 449-2847  
Fax: (406) 449-7860

### Federal A-133 Audit Threshold Increasing (REVISED)

For audits of FY 2003-04, the threshold requiring a school district to have a "Federal" (A-133) audit instead of a regular "Yellow Book" audit increased to \$500,000 from the current \$300,000 level. This change means that districts spending \$500,000 or more Federal assistance (including the value of

*Through FY 2002-03, districts with at least \$300,000 of Federal assistance had a Federal A-133 audit each year.*

*Beginning FY 2003-04, the threshold moves to \$500,000.*

USDA commodities) in a year starting in FY 2003-04 will require an audit under Federal OMB Circular A-133 standards. The Federal audit places more scrutiny on the district's Federal funding than a regular audit.

Approximately 75 districts currently meet the \$300,000 Federal

assistance threshold. OPI estimates that under the higher threshold, about 55 of those (73%) still will require federal audits.

Districts that may be entering contracts for audits of FY 2004-05 should keep this difference in mind and specify in the contract if an A-133 audit is no longer required.

Contact: Mike Waterman at (406) 444-4524 or [mwaterman@state.mt.us](mailto:mwaterman@state.mt.us).



### OPI Plans Pupil Transportation System on Citrix

OPI is planning a system that allows MAEFAIRS registered users to electronically enter bus information, bus routes, bus inspections, individual transportation contracts, and make claims for reimbursement through Citrix. Maxine Mougeot, Pupil Transportation Director, anticipates the system will be made available for FY 2005-06. Training will be made available in summer of 2005.

Meanwhile, please go to the Internet for Bus Driver Certificate Forms. You can find OPI's form at:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/PupilTransport/TR-35.pdf> or the MASBO fill-in form at <http://www.masbo.com/TR-35.pdf>.

Contact: Maxine Mougeot at (406) 444-3096 or [mmougeot@state.mt.us](mailto:mmougeot@state.mt.us).

### **“Automatic” First Payment under Title I Part A**

In August, OPI made an automatic first payment of Title I, Part A funds to eligible districts that submitted a 2005 ESEA Consolidated Application. Unique among OPI grants, Title I Part A generated a payment of 10 % of the final district allocation without the district requesting a cash payment. The remaining Title I Part A funds will have to be requested along with all other Title funds approved in the 2005 ESEA Consolidated Application.

Beginning in July 1, 2005, OPI will discontinue the automatic first payment for Title, I Part A funds. Instead, all projects will receive payments based on the standard cash request form. This process will then be consistent with the process for other OPI grants. Additional reminders will be sent in the Spring of 2005.

OPI contact: Julia Dilly at (406) 444-4523 or [jdilly@state.mt.us](mailto:jdilly@state.mt.us).

### **Question of the Month: SB 424 and Cooperative Payments**



**Q:** The special ed cooperative sends our district money that we deposit into the Miscellaneous Programs Fund (15). If we pay salaries with that money, is it state/local or federal for SB 424 retirement purposes? In other words, can I use Retirement Fund for the related retirement costs?

**A:** It's impossible to know whether SB424 provisions apply without knowing what the source of the money is for the cooperative in

the first place. If the cooperative is passing the district some of the IDEA Part B or Preschool grants, that money is Federal and must be used to pay the retirement costs associated with the salaries. If the money is from the coop's Cooperative Fund (382), the money is probably state/local, and you could use the retirement fund. To be safe, it's advisable to ask the Cooperative where the money came from.

### **OPI Emails?**

Not sure you're receiving OPI's Official Emails? View all official OPI emails sent to districts or cooperatives at the following web address: (Bookmark it!)

[http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/Official\\_Mail](http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/Official_Mail)

If you prefer, ask OPI to send a copy of official emails to your most convenient email address. We also have an "Interested Parties" email listserve for others who are not associated with the school administration but want to receive the information. Contact Nica Carte at OPI to arrange it. It's absolutely essential that clerks, superintendents, and other administrators (principals, transportation directors, etc.) receive the official emails.

Alternatively, visit the address above once or twice a week to avoid missing any news that affects you!

OPI Contact: Nica Carte at (406) 444-4401 or [ncarte@state.mt.us](mailto:ncarte@state.mt.us).

### **Useful Websites**



**List of all Official OPI E-Mails:**

[http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/Official\\_Mail](http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/Official_Mail)

**CFDA Numbers for Federal Grants:** <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/FederalPrograms/handbook>

[html](#) (Appendix F of the OPI State and Federal Grants Handbook)

**Fill-In Forms Provided by MASBO:** Several fill-in forms (TR-1, TR-4, and grant cash request forms) are available on the MASBO website at <http://www.masbo.com>. Special thanks to MASBO's Roger Heimbigner, who developed the forms!

**OPI's GASB 34 Web Page:**  
<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/gasb34.html>.

**OPI's "Get Answers" searchable databases:**  
[http://data.opi.state.mt.us/scripts/rightnow.cfg/php.exe/enduser/std\\_alp.php](http://data.opi.state.mt.us/scripts/rightnow.cfg/php.exe/enduser/std_alp.php)

**Bus Safety and Driver Training Videos:**  
<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/pupiltransport/TrainingVideos.pdf>

**School Finance forms and publications:** <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/forms.html>

**FP-14 Student Attendance Agreement (Fill-In Forms!)**  
<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/SchoolFinance/forms/FP14Fillin.pdf> (Fill-in Form)

**FP-14A Special Tuition Rates** (used with FP-14)

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/SchoolFinance/forms/FP14AFillin.pdf> (Fill-in Form)

**Montana Codes Annotated (MCA) Online:**  
<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/masterMCASearch.htm>

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#### **Traffic Ed Payments Made**

Annual payments to schools for traffic education were made to the County Treasurer in late August. The reimbursement rate was \$83.73 per student completing at least 50 percent of the classroom and 50 percent of the behind-the-wheel instruction. Payment information by district and by county can be viewed at [www.opi.state.mt.us/drivered](http://www.opi.state.mt.us/drivered). Several school reimbursement payments were withheld because they have not yet submitted the required year-end report.

#### **When are OPI payments made?**

- 1) Grants -- On the 10th of each month;
- 2) School food program payments -- By the 25th of each month;
- 3) Direct state aid payments -- Between the 20th and the 25th, based on a set schedule.
- 4) Guaranteed Tax Base Aid -- November and May
- 5) Transportation Reimbursements -- March and June

All OPI payments are posted at: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/payments/index.html>

*Bookmark that site!!!*